MARVEL

1

MOON KNIGHT

CITY OF THE DEAD

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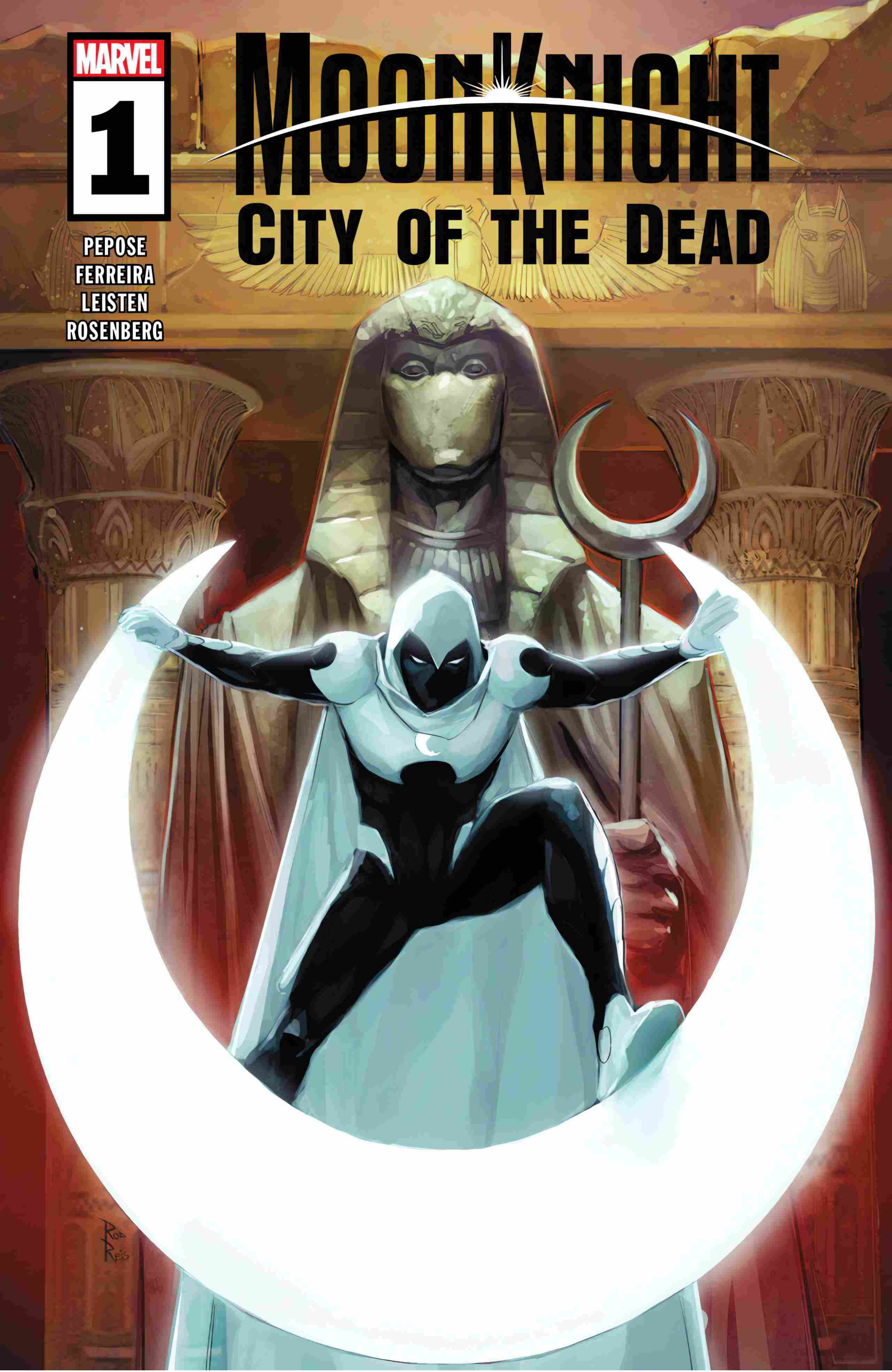

Mercenary Marc Spector died and was reborn in the shadow of Khonshu, the Egyptian god of the moon. Spector became Moon Knight, the Fist of Khonshu, to fight evil. Through his Midnight Mission, he is the defender of all those who travel at night.

MOON KNIGHT

CITY OF THE DEAD

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NO MATTER WHAT I DO...I CAN'T ESCAPE THE *BLOOD.*

EVERY NIGHT, I TRY TO FORGET.

AND EVERY NIGHT, THE GHOSTS WON'T LET ME.

I USED TO BE A MERCENARY--AN UNREPENTANT KILLER.

THE THINGS I DID... THEY CAN NEVER BE *FORGIVEN.*

AND SO EVERY NIGHT, I PUNISH MYSELF...AND PRAY ONE DAY, MY *PENANCE* WILL OUTWEIGH MY GUILT.

Thinking of you always L.

YET AS THE MOON RISES, I KNOW MY PRAYERS WILL BE LEFT *UNANSWERED...*

HELP!

...BECAUSE THE NIGHT CRIES OUT TO ME STILL.

PLEASE-- SOMEBODY HELP!

THE KID'S NAME IS *KHALIL NASSER.*

EVER SINCE HIS BROTHER DIED, HE'S BEEN ON THE STREETS--AND A REGULAR AT THE *MIDNIGHT MISSION.*

NNF-- D-DON'T COME ANY CLOSER...

YES, THAT'S IT--KEEP RUNNING, LITTLE MOUSE...

BUT THESE PUNKS ARE *ANIMALS*-- A STREET GANG OBSESSED WITH THE EGYPTIAN DEATH GOD, ANUBIS.

THEY CALL THEMSELVES THE *SONS OF THE JACKAL.*

YOUR FEAR MAKES THE BLOOD TASTE THAT MUCH SWEETER.

MURDER, TORTURE, HUMAN SACRIFICE-- THEY'VE MADE A GRUESOME NAME FOR THEMSELVES ALREADY...

WHATEVER THEY HAVE IN MIND FOR KHALIL, IT WON'T BE PRETTY.

IN THE NAME OF THE DEATHBRINGER, I BRING YOU THIS SACRED OFFERING!

THAT'S ALL RIGHT--I WASN'T PLANNING ON PLAYING NICE EITHER.

SHNKK

SHNKK

SHNKK

NYARRRRRGH!

I AM THE GHOST THAT LIVES.

I AM THE SHADOW THAT ENDURES. I AM THE TRAVELER, THE EMBRACER, THE PATHFINDER...

...THE DEFENDER OF THOSE WHO TRAVEL AT NIGHT.

MY NAME IS MARC SPECTOR...AND I AM THE *MOON KNIGHT.*

MEMORY OF A KILLER

THE JACKALS CIRCLE AS I LAND--THEY'RE NOT SCARED OF ME YET.

I'M GIVING YOU JUST ONE CHANCE--LET THE BOY GO...

...OR MEET YOUR GOD UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL.

IT'S THE FIST OF KHONSHU, GET--*NNF!*

THRAK

THEY WILL BE SOON ENOUGH.

MISTER KNIGHT--LOOK OUT!

THE KID'S TENACIOUS--KEEPS ME FROM A .45-CALIBER MIGRAINE.

RUN ALL YOU LIKE, MOON PRIEST--NOT EVEN YOU CAN STOP DEATH!

I COULD SPEND ALL NIGHT TEACHING THESE CREEPS A LESSON.

PAFF

YEAH--KEEP TELLING YOURSELF THAT...

BRATATATAT!

CHNK

INSTEAD...I MAKE MY POINT USING THE MOST FORCEFUL ARGUMENT POSSIBLE.

...WHILE YOU SPEND THE NEXT SIX WEEKS IN TRACTION.

RRRRRRRRRRKRRRROOOM

BUT LIKE I SAID... TONIGHT IS ABOUT PUNISHMENT.

NOW-- WHILE HE'S DISTRACTED--!

WHUDD

SOMETIMES IT'S NOT ABOUT IF YOU CAN DODGE THE HIT...

...AH $#@%.

HEH... NOW YOU GET IT.

...IT'S ABOUT WHETHER YOU *DESERVE* TO.

KRSSSSH

THE LAST JACKAL MAKES A RUN FOR IT-- HE'S MOVING FAST.

SCREW THIS, I'M OUTTA HERE!

HE'S SCARED-- TOO SCARED TO NOTICE THE TRUCK.

SKREEEEEEEE

THE SHRIEKING TIRES DROWN OUT HIS LAST CRY FOR MERCY...

THOOOOM

...AS THE JACKAL FINDS HIS JUDGMENT AFTER ALL.

I'M SORRY YOU SAW THAT, KHALIL--WE'LL GET YOU PATCHED UP...

KHALIL!

SOME CALL ME THE FIST OF KHONSHU--YET RECENTLY, I LEARNED EVEN A GOD HAS *TWO* FISTS.

MY COUNTERPART'S NAME IS BADR...HE CALLS HIMSELF *HUNTER'S MOON.*

WE DON'T OFTEN SEE EYE TO EYE ON THINGS...

BAMM BAMM

WHAT--?

BUT TONIGHT...HE'S THE ONLY CHANCE OF SURVIVAL KHALIL'S GOT.

BADR--I NEED YOUR HELP!

KRAKOOM!!

SPECTOR, WHAT HAVE YOU DONE--?!

THERE'S NO TIME FOR A LECTURE, DAMMIT--I CAN'T FIND A PULSE...

"DO WHATEVER YOU HAVE TO DO... JUST SAVE HIM!"

NNFF-- PREPARING EPINEPHRINE...

DAMMIT-- B.P. IS 60/40 AND DROPPING...

BREATHE, CHILD-- COME ON, BREATHE!

NO--HE'S CRASHING!

EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE

RRRR-- STAY WITH ME, BOY...

UREEEEEEEEEEEE

...IN THE NAME OF KHONSHU, YOU MUST FIGHT!

FTHOOM

THANK YOU, FATHER...

WE HAVE A PULSE.

I BRACE MYSELF FOR BADR'S BARBS--HOW I'M FAILING ONCE AGAIN AS KHONSHU'S AVATAR.

WE NEED TO TALK, BROTHER...

BUT AS HE SPEAKS, I REALIZE THE NEWS IS TOO DIRE FOR EVEN *HIM* TO GLOAT.

KHALIL'S ALIVE--BUT ONLY JUST *BARELY.*

I'M SORRY-- THE BOY SUSTAINED A CONCUSSION, INTERNAL BLEEDING, FULL CARDIAC ARREST...

HE DIED ON THE TABLE FOR FIVE MINUTES BEFORE I COULD BRING HIM BACK.

NO SIGNS OF BRAIN ACTIVITY... WITHOUT A VENTILATOR, HE WOULD PERISH IN MINUTES.

"YOU SAID KHALIL WAS ATTACKED BY THE SONS OF THE JACKAL...?

"WHAT COULD THEY POSSIBLY ACHIEVE BY MURDERING AN ORDINARY BOY?"

THE RAGE FILLS WITHIN ME--AND I SUDDENLY HAVE A PLAN.

HE'S NOT DEAD *YET,* BADR.

THAT SAID...IT WOULD HELP IF MY PLAN WASN'T DANGEROUSLY *INSANE.*

WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING, SPECTOR?

YOU SAID IT YOURSELF, BADR--KHALIL DIED FOR FIVE MINUTES.

WE MANAGED TO SAVE HIS BODY... BUT WHAT HAPPENED TO HIS *SOUL?*

UNBELIEVABLE--NOT EVEN YOU CAN BE SO ARROGANT...

EVEN IF HIS SPIRIT WERE THERE, NO MORTAL ENTERS *THE DUAT* AND SURVIVES!

I KNOW THIS IS TRAGIC, SPECTOR--BUT I CANNOT SEE WHAT YOU HOPE TO GAIN...

DO YOU HONESTLY BELIEVE YOU CAN RESCUE KHALIL FROM *THE CITY OF THE DEAD?*

THE QUESTION LINGERS IN THE AIR--BUT WE BOTH KNOW THERE'S ONLY ONE ANSWER.

I DO--FOR AS LONG AS THERE'S STILL LIFE IN HIM, HE REMAINS A TRAVELER OF THE NIGHT...

...AND THAT MEANS THE BOY IS STILL UNDER MY PROTECTION.

→SIGH←

...I BELIEVE YOU MEAN "OUR" PROTECTION, BROTHER.

AND SO, WE BEGIN.

TRAINED IN THE SECRETS OF EGYPTIAN LORE, BADR PREPARES THE RITUALS FOR MY DESCENT.

IF YOU ARE TO TRULY EMBARK ON THIS JOURNEY, BE WARNED...

THE DUAT IS A ***DANGEROUS*** REALM--THE PLACE WHERE SOULS GO TO BE JUDGED.

WE SLIP BACK INTO FAMILIAR ROLES--I CAN FEEL BADR'S WITHERING JUDGMENT UPON ME...

YOU MAY SEE THINGS THAT WILL UNSETTLE YOU--THE CITY IS PURELY PSYCHOACTIVE...

WITHOUT PROPER MENTAL DISCIPLINE, THE WORLD CAN SHIFT GREATLY BASED ON THE CONTENTS OF ONE'S HEART.

DOES THIS SOUND LIKE SOMETHING YOU CAN ACCOMPLISH, SPECTOR?

FOR A TRUE BELIEVER, MY BROTHER SURE IS GOOD AT BEING A SKEPTIC.

YOU KNOW ME, BADR...

...MENTAL DISCIPLINE IS MY MIDDLE NAME.

VERY WELL, THEN...LET US DETACH YOUR *KA* FROM YOUR BODY.

PREPARE YOURSELF FOR *METAPHYSICAL EVACUATION*--BUT BE WARNED...

BADR SPEAKS--AND SUDDENLY I FEEL THE WORLD SHIFT FROM ITS AXIS.

AND AFTER THAT...THINGS ONLY GET *STRANGER.*

...THE EXPERIENCE MAY PROVE TO BE... *DISCONCERTING.*

THE ABYSS BECKONS TO ME AS I FALL INTO THE ENDLESS BLACK...

YET AFTER AN ETERNITY OF NOTHINGNESS, JUST AS I FEAR I'M ABOUT TO LOSE MY MIND...

...THAT'S WHEN I FINALLY SEE THE LIGHT.

AND WHEN I OPEN MY EYES, I KNOW I AM FINALLY HERE...

...DOWN IN THE CITY OF THE DEAD.

THE CITY'S GEOGRAPHY SHIFTS AND RESHUFFLES CONSTANTLY, LIKE A CLOCKWORK MAZE.

THE ETERNAL SANDS ARE DOTTED WITH TURQUOISE TREES AND LAKES OF SMOLDERING FIRE...

...AS THE SOULS OF A THOUSAND GENERATIONS CONGREGATE BELOW.

THE SCALE OF THIS REALM IS OVERWHELMING...

...BUT I NEED TO CATCH MY BEARINGS FAST--BECAUSE THERE'S ONE PLACE I NEED TO VISIT FIRST...

THE GATES OF OSIRIS--THE PALACE OF THE ANCIENT GOD OF DEATH AND REBIRTH.

AND THE CITY'S LONE PASSAGEWAY BACK TO THE LAND OF THE LIVING.

IF ANYONE WOULD KNOW KHALIL'S WHEREABOUTS, IT WOULD BE OSIRIS--IF I CAN GET PAST HIS GUARDS FIRST.

YOU SHOULD NOT BE HERE, MORTAL--THIS DOMAIN IS ***OFF-LIMITS*** TO YOUR KIND.

MY NAME IS MARC SPECTOR--I AM THE FIST OF KHONSHU.

WITH MY MASTER'S SANCTION, I SEEK AN AUDIENCE WITH HE WHO BEARS THE EYE--THE MIGHTY ***OSIRIS.***

THOTH IS THE GOD OF WISDOM AND HIEROGLYPHS--BUT CLEARLY NOT THE GOD OF HAVING A POKER FACE.

HMPH--THE LORD OF SILENCE IS...INDISPOSED.

UNTIL HIS BUSINESS IS COMPLETE, HE IS NOT RECEIVING VISITORS AT THIS TIME.

WHILE SHEZMU THE EXECUTIONER APPEARS KEEN TO LIVE UP TO HIS NAME.

YOU, HOWEVER, REMAIN A TRESPASSER IN OSIRIS' REALM...

UNLESS YOU WISH FOR THE SCALES OF JUSTICE TO SHOW HOW BLOODSTAINED YOUR HEART TRULY IS.

AND JUST LIKE THAT, I KNOW SOMETHING'S GONE ROTTEN IN THE CITY OF THE DEAD...

YOU MISUNDERSTAND, EXECUTIONER...THIS WASN'T A ***REQUEST.***

FOR I SERVE THE GREATEST OF GREAT GODS--AND HIS MISSION SHALL ***NOT*** BE DENIED.

YOU SPEAK WITH AUDACITY, MOON PRIEST--BUT THAT IS ALL YOU HAVE.

KHONSHU LIES IN CHAINS...HIS AVATARS NO LONGER IMMUNE TO DEATH'S TOUCH.

SO HEED MY WISDOM, AND DEPART TO YOUR MORTAL WORLD.

THERE IS NOTHING FOR YOU DOWN HERE--AND IF YOU SEEK TO CAUSE TROUBLE...

"...KNOW THAT IN THE CITY OF THE DEAD...OUR JUDGMENT IS FAR HARSHER THAN YOURS.

‹HAFF-- OH GODS...›*

‹YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND-- SHE WAS UNFAITHFUL TO ME!›

‹THAT TREACHEROUS SOW FLED INTO THE ARMS OF ANOTHER MAN!›

*TRANSLATED FROM ANCIENT EGYPTIAN.

‹THEY DESERVED EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENED, DO YOU HEAR ME?!›

‹HAFF HAFF-- THEY DESERVED EVERYTHING--!›

RMMMMMBBB

<N-NO-- I TAKE IT ALL BACK!>

<P-PLEASE-- ANYTHING BUT THIS--!>

"FOR IN THE EYES OF *AMMUT THE DEVOURER*, OUR SINS WILL ALWAYS FIND US OUT...

"AND HER APPETITE FOR VENGEANCE IS TRULY *LIMITLESS!*"

KRNCH

NOOOOO!

THE BLACK SUN FALLS, AND I'M NO CLOSER TO FINDING KHALIL THAN WHEN I STARTED.

MISSING GODS, SLAUGHTERED CHILDREN...AND A DEATH CULT LINKING THEM TOGETHER.

THE SONS OF THE JACKAL ARE OBSESSED WITH THE CONCEPT OF LIFE AFTER DEATH...

...WHICH MEANS THOSE ANUBIS-WORSHIPPERS HAVE TO BE DOWN HERE AS WELL.

THE STREETS ARE PACKED TIGHT WITH SOULS--I SCAN THE CROWD LOOKING FOR A SIGN...

...UNTIL I CATCH AN OLD GHOST STARING BACK AT ME.

DOCTOR ALARUNE--?

NO--IT CAN'T BE HIM. IT'S ONLY A TRICK OF THE MIND...

OH GOD--NOT YOU!

...DISTRACTING ME FROM THE REAL TASK AT HAND.

THE JACKAL MOVES *FAST*--EVEN FASTER THAN BEFORE--

--BECAUSE WHILE DEATH MAY NO LONGER HOLD ANY TERRORS FOR HIM...

NO--YOU CAN'T BE HERE, DAMMIT!

HE STILL REMEMBERS WHAT I DID TO HIS FRIENDS.

YOU REALLY THOUGHT YOU'D ESCAPED ME, DIDN'T YOU?

THAT WAS YOUR FIRST MISTAKE...

THUNK

THUNK

THUNK

DEAD OR ALIVE--I'LL NEVER STOP COMING FOR YOU!

THE *CRESCENT DARTS* MISS THEIR MARK--HE KNOWS THESE STREETS ALREADY--

YOU GUYS-- I DUNNO HOW, BUT HE FOLLOWED US HERE!

THE MOON KNIGHT... HE'S--!

BUT THAT'S NOT A PROBLEM FOR ME...

AFTER ALL... WHAT BETTER WAY TO LEARN A CITY THAN BY USING A TOUR GUIDE?

GENTLEMEN-- LET'S CUT TO THE CHASE.

FOR A MOMENT, I CONVINCE MYSELF THIS MIGHT BE OVER QUICKLY.

...EITHER YOU TELL ME WHAT YOU DID WITH KHALIL...

...OR WHAT I DO NEXT WILL LEAVE YOU BEGGING FOR ANOTHER SPEEDING TRUCK.

BUT THAT'S WHEN THE JACKALS REMIND ME WHY I'M REALLY HERE...

QUICKLY--THE *CHEST--!*

BRING ME THE HEART!

NYAAARRRGH!

BECAUSE DEEP DOWN...I'VE ALWAYS BEEN A GLUTTON FOR PUNISHMENT.

YESSSSS-- FEEL THE POWER WITHIN YOU, BROTHERS...

BREATHE IN THE HEART OF *IMHOTEP*...

"...FILLED WITH ANCIENT MEMORIES BEYOND HUMAN COMPREHENSION!

"FOR HE BATTLED INVADERS FROM THE STARS WITH THE GREAT *EN SABAH NUR*..."

...AND THE TERRIFYING HORSEMEN WHO STRODE BESIDE HIM!

NOW TELL ME, FIST OF KHONSHU...

...ARE YOU VERY AFRAID NOW?

...AH $#@%.

KRSSH

JUST WHEN I THOUGHT I'D FINALLY FIGURED THIS PLACE OUT...

...THE JACKALS JUST MAINLINED THE POWER OF THE *FOUR HORSEMEN OF APOCALYPSE.*

IT'S LIKE I SAID-- SOMETIMES, YOU CAN'T DODGE THE HIT...

PREPARE TO MEET OBLIVION, MOON PRIEST!

BUT IF YOU'RE LUCKY...YOU CAN REDIRECT IT.

THOOM

MY VISION BLURS-- THE JACKAL NEARLY TAKES MY HEAD OFF.

KRAKT

WHAT DID BADR SAY ABOUT "MENTAL DISCIPLINE"?

WE FALL THROUGH MY PAST--CRASHING THROUGH ALL MY WORST MEMORIES...

YOU'D BE AMAZED AT HOW MUCH PAIN SOMEONE CAN TAKE...

...WHEN THEY KNOW THEY DESERVE IT.

BEFORE I EVEN OPEN MY EYES, I CAN FEEL THE CHANGE IN THE WIND.

AND I KNOW EXACTLY WHERE I AM...

KHOOM

I'M BACK ON THE STREETS OF ALEXANDRIA...

...BACK WHEN I WAS CUTTING MY TEETH AS A PROFESSIONAL SOLDIER-FOR-HIRE.

EXCEPT THIS WAS NO ORDINARY MISSION...

BRRRTTTATATTATTATTAT

...THIS WAS THE DAY WHEN I TRULY LOST EVERYTHING.

THE MOMENT LINGERS... AND THE JACKALS DECIDE TO ***BURY*** ME IN IT.

GOING SOMEWHERE, MOON PRIEST?!

THRAKK

MY MASK FILLS UP WITH BLOOD-- BREATHING FEELS LIKE BROKEN SHARDS IN MY CHEST.

NOT A BAD SHOWING, LITTLE MAN...

BUT NOW IT'S TIME TO PUT YOU DOWN.

HEH-- HAHAHAHA...

I'D CONSIDER THIS A TRAGEDY... IF ONLY THEY WEREN'T SO *DAMNED STUPID.*

RRRR... WHAT'S SO FUNNY?

HEH-- YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND...

YOU'VE ALL JUST MADE A TERRIBLE MISTAKE.

KMMMBBB

BECAUSE I KNOW MY SCARS BETTER THAN ANYONE...

...AND I REMEMBER HOW THIS STORY ENDS.

POOM

THE JACKALS SCREAM IN AGONY AS THE FLAMES CONSUME THE BLOCK.

YOU KNOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN YOU AND ME...?

THEY'RE TRAPPED INSIDE A DEAD MAN'S *NIGHTMARE*...

...AND THEY'RE ABOUT TO FIND OUT...MY NIGHTMARES ARE WHERE I FEEL MOST AT HOME.

I DON'T CARE IF I BURN.

THE MEMORY FADES, AND WE FIND OURSELVES OUTSIDE THE JACKALS' LAIR.

THIS IS YOUR LAST WARNING--WHAT DID YOU DO WITH THE BOY?!

TALK, DAMMIT--!

CONSUMED BY MY GUILT...I DON'T NOTICE THAT I'VE LEFT MY BACK EXPOSED.

SONUVA...

MARC... WATCH YOUR SIX!

KRAK T

THE MEMORY FADES-- YET I STILL SEE HER STANDING BEFORE ME.

NO-- IT CAN'T BE...

BECAUSE AFTER ALL THESE YEARS OF PUNISHMENT, MY PRAYERS HAVE BEEN *ANSWERED*...

...AS THE UNIVERSE FINALLY DECIDES TO GIVE ME SOMETHING BACK.

LAYLA--?!

IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE ANYONE'S CALLED ME THAT, MARC...

NOW THEY CALL ME THE GUARDIAN OF THE DUAT--THE BLADE OF *TAWERET* HERSELF...

THE SCARLET SCARAB!

I BREATHE HER IN AS I HOLD HER, AND TELL HER HOW MUCH I'VE MISSED HER.

BUT I CAN'T HELP BUT BE AFRAID--BECAUSE LAYLA'S THE ONE WHO TAUGHT ME...

...THAT THE DEEPEST PAIN OF ALL...COMES FROM THE PEOPLE YOU LOVE THE MOST.

I DON'T UNDERSTAND-- WHAT IS IT YOU WANT WITH ME?

YOU'LL FIND OUT SOON ENOUGH, BOY...

THE RITUAL OF OSIRIS CANNOT BE COMPLETED UNTIL YOUR PHYSICAL FORM DIES...

BUT KNOW THIS...NO ONE ESCAPES FROM *THE JACKAL KNIGHT.*

YOU'RE MAKING A BIG MISTAKE-- BECAUSE MISTER KNIGHT IS GONNA FIND YOU...

...AND HE'S GONNA MAKE YOU WISH YOU'D NEVER BEEN BORN.

AH, YES...I'D HEARD MARC HAD MANAGED TO CLAW HIS WAY DOWN HERE.

UNFORTUNATELY FOR HIM, HE'S SENT MANY MEN TO THIS REALM OVER THE YEARS...

AND THANKS TO THE SORCEROUS MIGHT OF ANUBIS...

...THEY'RE QUITE EAGER TO RETURN THE FAVOR.

NEXT: THE LEGION OF THE UNLIVING!

NEXT:

MOON KNIGHT

CITY OF THE DEAD